IN THE CLAIMS:

Please find below a listing of all pending claims. The statuses of the claims are set forth in parentheses.   For those currently amended claims, underlined text indicates insertions and ~~strikethrough~~ text (and/or double-brackets) indicates deletions.

1.(Currently Amended) A work support method to be implemented in a computer, comprising:

storing by the computer skill information of workers and information related to an end date of a training which is being received by each worker in a skill information storage unit;

storing by the computer information of each work item with respect to a work in a work item information storage unit;

storing by the computer worker information related to a worker to be registered for each work item in a work information storage unit;

extracting by the computer, with respect to each stored work item in response to a work order, worker information related to a worker having a skill capable of performing each work item, based on the skill information of workers stored in the skill information storage unit, and ~~re-extracting, upon~~ if no worker information is extractable for a work item as a result of said extracting, extracting worker information related to ~~any~~ a worker who will have a skill capable of performing said work item by a time when said work item of the work order is generated, based on the information related to the end date of the training stored in the skill information storage unit; and

storing by the computer, data of the extracted worker with respect to each work item in the work item information storage unit.

2.(Previously Cancelled)

3.(Currently Amended) The work support method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said extracting extracts, by the computer, worker information of a first worker to actually perform each work item, and worker information of a second worker to assist the first worker, and stores the extracted work information of the first and second workers in the work information storage unit.

4.(Currently Amended) The work support method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said extracting extracts, by the computer, worker information of the second worker having a skill comparable to that of the first worker, by referring to the information stored in the skill information storage unit.

5.(Currently Amended) A work support method to be implemented in a work support apparatus that includes a processor, said work support method comprising:

storing by the processor skill information of workers and information related to an end date of a training which is being received by each worker in a skill information storage unit which is accessible by the work support apparatus;

storing by the processor work item information with respect to a work in a work item information storage unit which is accessible by the work support apparatus;

storing by the processor worker information related to a worker to be registered for each work item with respect to the work in a work information storage unit which is accessible by the work support apparatus;

extracting by the processor, with respect to each work item stored in the work item information storage unit in response to a work order, worker information related to a worker having a skill capable of performing each work item, based on the skill information of workers stored in the skill information storage unit, and re-extracting, upon if no worker information is extractable for a work item as a result of said extracting, extracting worker information related to any a worker who will have

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a skill capable of performing said work item by a time when said work item of the
work order is generated, based on the information related to the end date of the
training stored in the skill information storage unit; and

        storing <u>by the processor,</u> data of the extracted worker with respect to each
work item in the work item information storage unit.

        6.(Currently Amended) A work support apparatus comprising:

        a skill information storage unit configured to store skill information of workers
and information related to an end date of a training which is being received by each
worker;

        a work item information storage unit configured to store work item
information with respect to a work;

        a work information storage unit configured to store worker information
related to a worker to be registered for each work item with respect to the work;
<u>and</u>

        <u>a processor comprising:</u>

                a worker extracting unit configured to extract <u>by a first extraction</u>, with
respect to each work item stored in the work item information storage unit in
response to a work order, worker information related to a worker having a skill
capable of performing each work item, based on the skill information of workers
stored in the skill information storage unit, and ~~to re-extract, upon~~ <u>if</u> no worker
information is extractable for a work item <u>as a result of said first extraction</u>, <u>to</u>
<u>extract by a second extraction</u> worker information of ~~any~~ <u>a</u> worker who will have a
skill capable of performing said work item by a time when said work item of the
work order is actually generated, based on the information related to the end date of
the training stored in the skill information storage unit; and

                a storing unit configured to store data of the extracted worker with
respect to each work item in the work item information storage unit.

7.(Previously Cancelled)

8.(Previously Presented) The work support apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein said worker extracting unit extracts worker information related to a first worker to actually perform each work item, and worker information related to a second worker to assist the first worker, and stores the extracted worker information of the first and second workers in the work information storage unit.

9.(Previously Presented) The work support apparatus as claimed in claim 8, wherein said worker extracting unit extracts worker information of the second worker having a skill comparable to that of the first worker, by referring to the information stored in the skill information storage unit.

10.(Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a work support program for causing a computer to carry out a work support operation, said work support program comprising:

a skill information storage procedure causing the computer to store skill information of workers and information related to an end date of a training which is being received by each worker in a skill information storage unit;

a work item information storage procedure causing the computer to store work item information with respect to a work in a work item information storage unit;

a work information storage procedure causing the computer to store worker information related to a worker to be registered for each work item with respect to the work in a work information storage unit;

a worker extracting procedure causing the computer to extract <u>by a first extraction</u>, with respect to each work item stored in the work item information storage unit in response to a work order, worker information related to a worker having a skill capable of performing each work item, based on the skill information

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of workers stored in the skill information storage unit, and ~~to re-extract, upon~~ <u>if</u> no
worker information is extractable for a work item <u>as a result of said first extraction,</u>
<u>to extract by a second extraction</u> worker information related to ~~any~~ <u>a</u> worker who
will have a skill capable of performing said work item by a time when said work item
of the work order is generated, based on the information related to the end date of
the training stored in the skill information storage unit; and

       a storing procedure causing the computer to store data of the extracted
worker with respect to each work item in the work item information storage unit.

       11.(Previously Cancelled)

       12.(Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as
claimed in claim 10, wherein said worker extracting procedure causes the computer
to extract worker information related to a first worker to actually perform each work
item, and worker information related to a second worker to assist the first worker,
and to store the extracted worker information related to the first and second
workers in the work information storage unit.

       13.(Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as
claimed in claim 12, wherein said worker extracting procedure causes the computer
to extract worker information of the second worker having a skill comparable to that
of the first worker, by referring to the information stored in the skill information
storage unit.